

February 14, 2013

Dear Committee:

I am sorry I could not be there in person today. I am writing to you because I believe in the Inclusion Teaming program and the funding that they are seeking. I am a mom of triplets who all have high functioning autism. My boys have AS and my daughter has Non Verbal Learning.

I know that all school systems try their hardest to provide what they can for services for our children. However, with children who are so high functioning these services fall short for them. The System feels they don't need as much help preparing but that's so far from the truth. The system falls apart for older children with learning disabilities, high functioning autism, and ADHD because after grade school the programs give the children less help and there is no help when it comes to teaching our children the social skills they will need to succeed in the future.

I found this program through a friend. However, it is located in New Haven. I live in the Hartford area and trying to get all my children to New Haven to participate has proven too difficult. I was disappointed to say the least because with this program my son who goes to a trade school would better understand how to socially interact with students from multiple social backgrounds.

The school does not properly prepare our special children for real world and so when they get out there they get themselves into trouble. Teenagers turn on them and start to bully them and as a mother trying to protect her children it's very scary to send them out the door every day and hope I don't get a call from their schools saying they have been hurt.

This program is different as it helps typical children learn that special needs children are not as bad as they think. It teaches them that they think differently, express themselves differently and sometimes lack the social cues to respond appropriately. It teaches our special children to learn how read cues, learn what certain facial expressions mean, how to properly engage in a conversation without sounding weird.

This program provides our children with the means to try to better themselves and prepare them to go out into the work world. Our children are smart, however, they are lacking in some basic social skill sets because the schools don't have the time or resources to teach this. I want this program to get funding so it can be brought to towns all over Connecticut and reach the so many people who need this program.

Yes, I know there are children out there who are in a lot worse spot then ours but if our children are not given a helping hand and a step up our children may get frustrated, not go on to college or finish high school for that matter, because it's too frustrating for them to understand the world around them. They need a program such as this. This program can provide them the tools to make a best effort to make something of themselves. This program will give them the courage to go on and learn more. Strive to be whatever they want to be. They just need the tools to help them learn the social skills to make it in the world so they can thrive and live on their own, are able to support themselves, be productive members of society, and rely less on State support down the road. I believe in this program! I want to watch it grow! This program needs to spread throughout the State where no only my children but so many others can be assisted. Please consider this program for funding. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me at klombardo6@att.net.

Thank you for your time,

Kimberly A Lombardo.